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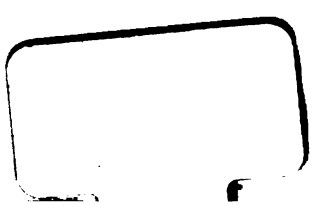

Christian Science and Kindred Delusions

BY

Luther Day Harkness

WITH AN

Introduction

BY

Prof. Henry Churchill King, A.M., D.D.

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Introduction.

THE files of the *Publishers' Weekly* make it evident that the literature critical of Christian Science is rapidly increasing, but there is certainly room for this plain, straightforward, unprofessional, layman's challenge of the system. Mr. Harkness gives here a clear and interesting statement of facts, that deserve the careful consideration of every man who cares to keep this generation sane.

He does not call in question the honesty of the great majority of Christian Scientists, nor the reality of many of the cures; he only asks people of sense to take account of undoubted psycho-physical laws in judging of these cures, and soberly to face the question whether it is not vastly more reasonable to refer these cures to the action of these laws than to the acceptance of such a mass of metaphysical and exegetical absurdity as he certainly shows Mrs. Eddy's book to be. It were well for both our religious and intellectual health that we should give heed to his suggestion. For the ease with which large numbers of well-meaning men and women allow themselves to be swept away into this delusion, ought to give us all pause, for it argues grave faults in our education, both Christian and scientific. If there were any fairly adequate grasp of Christianity or of the scientific facts involved, this could not occur.

Has the Christian church emphasized as it ought the present personal reality and power of God? Has it given

the place it ought, to the peace and content born of a genuine and hearty trust in a Heavenly Father? Has it cultivated as it ought, the undaunted courage of such a trust? Has it given a fair recognition to mental as well as physical laws? and has it not too often, by its arbitrary use of the Bible, given grave occasion for just such abuse of interpretation as this of Mrs. Eddy?

But let every one who intends in any degree to heed the teaching of Christ, ponder well whether he cares to avow or to defend a system which denies the personality of God, denies the personality of man, denies the reality of sin, and so the reality of redemption, as well as the reality of evil, and treats both sin and evil as Christ did not; that denies in the Bible whatever does not suit its purpose, and accepts Mrs. Eddy's Science and Health as of divine authority.

It is evident that the great mass of Christian Science adherents simply exercise the common right of poor human nature to be shockingly inconsistent, and allow their influence to be cast in favor of this delusion, while they really *shed* a large part of its doctrines. Is it not high time that those who through some "cure" on themselves, or others, have gone over to a profession of Christian Science, should wake up to the reality of the simply abysmal follies into which they have leaped? I find myself simply unable to believe that many of these adherents can have any idea of seriously defending much of what Mrs. Eddy has written. Witness the "Glossary" of Science and Health. Let it be deliberately said and clearly understood, on all hands, that the person who intends to be

a thoroughgoing believer in Christian Science agrees simply to turn his back on all the most assured results of modern science, on every respectable philosophical thinker, and on every even poorest pretense of an honest historical exegesis of scripture. That this result does not often fully follow is not due to any saving virtue in the system, but only to the healthful inconsistency of the "mortal mind," of which the devotee has not been able wholly to rid himself. The simple fact is, that the teaching of Mrs. Eddy is such stupendous folly, especially in its philosophy and exegesis, that it is exceedingly difficult seriously to refute it. It seems as if it could only be laughed out of court; and to this to-be-desired end Mr. Harkness' discussion ought to contribute. One is reminded of Paulsen's remark about a certain form of materialism, of which he says, it "is absolutely irrefutable; not because it is true, however, but because it is meaningless. The absurd has this in common with the truth, that it cannot be refuted."

But the inconsistencies of Mrs. Eddy's system are so palpable that they ought to make even a pretty thoughtless man wonder a little: e.g., If the body is nothing and has no *real* needs, as the system affirms, it is difficult to explain the need by even the most advanced Christian Scientists of food and drink and fire and clothing. So, too, Christian Science is based on the denial of matter and evil, and yet the healing of bodily infirmities occupies almost exclusive attention. Christ made it absolutely subordinate. Again, the two facts which really give the system all its power—the presence and reality of a

personal God, and the influence of human mind over body —are vehemently denied by Christian Science. And as a last example, Mrs. Eddy's attempted explanation of the reason that a poison kills, though the person taking it believes it absolutely harmless, is a two-edged sword. Her theory, as Mr. Harkness points out, is that the death is due to the "majority opinion." But obviously if the "majority opinion" is so controlling, Christian Science *offers no real way of escape from sickness and pain.* In other words, her explanation of the failures of her system explains away all value in the system. And coupled with her alleged suggestion that Mr. Eddy's death was due to arsenical poisoning mentally administered by enemies, this theory of the "majority opinion" is an open invitation to return to the superstition and terror of the "evil eye" and to the horrors of witchcraft.

The true deliverance from this delusion is plain knowledge of the facts. Those who feel that they are in honesty bound to accept the vagaries of Christian Science on account of its cures, may well note the complete parallels Mr. Harkness is able to bring forward, and the evidence he adduces that the direct agent is the influence of mind over body. Mr. Harkness could fully accept the prefatory words of Rev. J. M. Buckley, D.D., in his more extended treatment of a similar theme: "The author has adopted certain principles as working laws: namely, that before endeavoring to explain how phenomena exist, it is necessary to determine precisely what exists; and that so long as it is possible to find a rational explanation of what unquestionably is, there is no reason to suspect, and it is

superstition to assume, the operation of supernatural causes."

It need not be denied that we have much still to learn concerning psycho-physical laws; but if any wish to be assured of the essential soundness of this little book, by further investigation, they will find ample material in Dr. Buckley's Faith Healing, Christian Science, and Kindred Phenomena, and in the strictly scientific works: Moll's Hypnotism, Bernheim's Suggestive Therapeutics, and Binet and Féré's Animal Magnetism.

HENRY CHURCHILL KING.

OBERLIN COLLEGE, JUNE 1, 1899.

Note.

THAT there is a widespread misapprehension as to the theories really held by Christian Scientists, Faith Healers, and Mind Curers is plainly shown by articles that have appeared from time to time in the religious and secular press. But I am especially moved to attempt (even at the risk of self-repetition) the definitions given below, by some editorial and other articles that have appeared in two prominent daily papers since this pamphlet has been in the hands of the printer in which the terms Faith Healing and Christian Science are used interchangeably—and it is implied, in one case, that the *human* mind is the curative agent according to the theory of Christian Science.

Faith Healing. This theory does not deny the actual existence of sickness and pain, but holds that they may be cured by faith and prayer alone—that is, a Faith Cure is a cure wrought by God in answer to prayer, without any material means. The use of any means other than anointing and prayer is sinful because it is tainted with unbelief.

Christian Science. This system denies the actual existence of sickness and pain, and claims that pain is simply a belief in pain, and that this belief is a delusion of the human mind; that the human mind is material, evil, and diabolical, and cannot relieve sickness; but that a cure is found only through the healing influence of "Principle," or "divine Science," or a certain mysterious and unexplained principle which is called "divine Mind."

Mind Cure. The school distinctively known as Mind Curers goes to absurd lengths in its theory that the human mind is the causation of disease; but it also holds (and in this too it goes far beyond the bounds of reason) that the human mind is the only curative agent. And its adherents are not required to abstain from "reasonable nursing" of the sick, or from paying some attention to the dictates of common-sense.

L. D. H.

OBERLIN, JUNE 3, 1899.

Christian Science and Kindred Delusions.

The Remarkable Growth of a Delusion.

To those optimistic persons who believe that credulity, superstition, and like vagaries of the human mind are fast dying out with the rapid spread of education and intelligence, the recent phenomenal growth of the Christian Science delusion must furnish food for reflection, and suggest to them a re-examination of the grounds of their belief. The system seems to have attracted but little public attention until about 1880, when a Mrs. Eddy came to Boston and opened a "Metaphysical College." In 1882 she organized the first Church of Christ, Scientist.[1] For a time little progress was made, but during the past few years the sect has carried on a most vigorous and successful propaganda. In 1898 a Christian Science board of education was established with headquarters in Boston, and the number of churches was increased by 75. It now claims to have 85 public reading-rooms, 304 chartered churches with a membership of 70,000; and not less than 300,000 avowed adherents in the United States and Canada.

[1] In 1895 this organization built a church on Falmouth street at a cost of $250,000. It is called the "Mother Church" in honor of the founder, and has a roll of 12,000 members from all over the country. The service consists mainly of readings from Mrs. Eddy's works. The "pastor *emeritus*" comes up occasionally by special train from Concord and favors her votaries with her gracious presence for a few moments, and, perhaps, delivers one of her oracles for their edification and instruction.

Mrs. Eddy.

Mary Mason Baker Glover Patterson Eddy, the "discoverer and founder" (*sic*) of Christian Science, now lives a sort of a cloistered life at Pleasant View, her beautiful estate near Concord, N. H. The skillful devices for heightening "effects" and enveloping herself in ghost-like mystery which she acquired in those old days when she gave spiritualistic séances, are not without their present uses. The pilgrims who gather in great numbers at the Pleasant View shrine are granted but a fleeting view of her person, and her oracular messages reach their ears from among the shadows. Her devotees maintain that she is "the woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet," referred to in the Apocalypse; that she is "The Feminine Principle of the Messianic Expectation" in the nineteenth century; and she is, after a manner, worshiped as a divine being.

Her Text-Book.

The first text-book of her system, Science and Health, with Key to the Scriptures, was published in 1875. Its doctrines, she says, were "a divine revelation to my understanding." "No human pen or tongue taught me the Science contained in this book, and neither pen nor tongue can ever overthrow it." But, strangely enough, this "infallible" revelation has been subjected to numberless revisions—frequently on account of some unusual display of Mrs. Eddy's ignorance of historical, scientific, or related subjects[1] which called out a storm of ridicule

[1] She gave a marked proof of the erudition (!) in which she prides herself, by publishing last year her discovery (which she copyrighted) that the word Pantheism was derived from the sylvan god Pan.

from the public press—and it is said that no two editions of the book are in agreement. The edition I have before me (the 162d) is, presumably, the authorized one *pro tem.*, as it bears the date of the current year.

Her Literary Style.

It is, I believe, an article of faith with Mrs. Eddy's adherents that her literary style is perfection itself. Such being the case, her manner of setting forth her doctrines should not be lightly criticized. Yet to the non-adept reader it seems, in the matter of clearness, to leave much to be desired. She appears to be overmuch given to "fine writing." There are many passages in the book which have a beautiful sound, but do not appear to mean anything in particular themselves, or to have any sort of connection with the subject in hand. Words and phrases are placed in relations which burden them with strange and esoteric meanings. There is a total lack of orderly sequence of thought. There are vain repetitions, stereotyped phrases without number, and pages of platitudes and commonplaces. Such, at least, is the impression Mrs. Eddy's style leaves with me; and I cannot escape the suspicion that the introduction of this great mass of irrelevant matter is a cunning device of the author's to hide her poverty of thought.

Her "Sacred Discovery."

I have found it, therefore, no small task to search out the particulars of Mrs. Eddy's system; but it appears, in the first place, that, in 1866, she "re-discovered the Principle of Divine Healing practiced by Christ and the apostles," and that she named her "sacred discovery"

Christian Science. She also calls it "Metaphysical" Healing, thus adding another burden to that much-misused word. She does not, however, conceal the fact that hers was mainly a new revelation. She intimates (p. 479) that while God revealed to Jesus Christ and the "ancient worthies" the spirit of Christian Science, they were without what she has—that is, the "absolute letter." This last seems quite probable.

"Has No Affinity with Human Knowledge."

She also particularly insists (quite unnecessarily, it would seem) that her divinely revealed Science must not be confused with that "lower" form of systematized knowledge gained in a humdrum way by laborious study and investigation. Such science being of human origin, Mrs. Eddy simply "eschews" it. Her system, she says, "has laid the axe of Science" (with a capital) "at the root of material knowledge." In her first chapter she draws a word picture of the ideal conditions which will prevail when the world has accepted Christian Science. It is a good illustration of her usual style, and I should like to show it entire. But a brief extract must suffice.

She Prophesies.

In that day, she says, "the seasons will come and go, with changes of time and tide, cold and heat, latitude and longitude. The agriculturist will find these changes cannot affect his crops."

From which it appears—though one cannot be sure, and I offer my interpretation with much diffidence—that we shall not have to go from home for a change of location; but that, as "the seasons come and go," the various de-

grees of latitude and longitude will be delivered at our doors, so to speak. The arrival of fifty degrees north in the dog days, for example, will afford a pleasing variety. Again, for example, the Dakota farmer can watch with indifference the incoming tide from the Pacific, or the approach of an Arctic flood bearing an iceberg, knowing that they will pass by, leaving his harvest fields unharmed.

Her Style of Argument.

But speaking in all seriousness, it is difficult to understand how any sober-minded, unprejudiced reader of this book can fail to be impressed with its thorough shabbiness as a literary production, or with the absurdity of its so-called metaphysical arguments. It ignores the laws of reason and common-sense; it takes no account of facts; it affirms the thing that is not; it denies the thing that is, and, as to its main contents, it is a mere mass of disjointed, inconsequential phrases, many of them absolutely meaningless to the ordinary comprehension. Confusion and fallacy go hand in hand through its pages; and as to many of Mrs. Eddy's so-called demonstrations and proofs—the theories would be just as adequately supported by quotations from a grocer's catalogue.

Her Idea of God.

Addressing ourselves first to the theology of Mrs. Eddy's system, we find that she appropriates the old Idealistic-Pantheistic idea of God; but she strenuously insists that it is hers by virtue of a divine revelation vouchsafed to her only ("I found nothing in modern systems," she says); and she tries to make it hers by disguising it in a

set of vague terms of her own coinage, on which she rings changes without number. Her manipulation robs the original idea of its reverent though inadequate conception of God, and all that it implies, and converts him into a mere, vague abstraction. God the loving Father, whose personality, whose nearness, whose pervading presence in our inmost lives, is the solace and hope of the human heart, and the very essence of Christianity, is unknown to the theology of Christian Science. According to Mrs. Eddy, he is a divine Principle, and it is as Principle, not person, that he saves men. He is not personal in the "lower sense," but is an "infinite" personality. The idea of Christ "is inseparable from Principle," and the Holy Ghost "is divine Science." And as audible prayer is a "hindrance," and as prayer addressed to a personal God—that is, personal in any conceivable sense —is "useless," it would seem that Mrs. Eddy's theology builds up a pretty effectual barrier between God and his creatures.

Her Metaphysics.

This perhaps brings us to what Mrs. Eddy is pleased to call the metaphysics of her system. One can gather but a very indefinite idea of the meaning *she* attaches to Principle, Truth, Mind, Substance, Intelligence, and the various other terms she applies to God. The whole subject is much befogged; but, stripped of a great mass of barren verbiage, her assumptions appear to be that the being she calls "Good, or God," is the infinite, supreme, eternal Principle, and nothing else in the universe has any real existence. Man is the "idea" of this Principle, or, to

use another of her terms, he is an idea of the divine Mind, and his mind is a part of, but not separate from, the divine Mind or Principle. The material world, which includes our mortal bodies and mortal minds,[1] has neither sensation, life, nor existence. Our corporeal senses "lie and cheat"; they are "five personal falsities," and their evidence is to be disregarded. Knowledge acquired through our eyes, ears, or other material senses "is an illusion."

Some of her Inconsistencies.

As Mrs. Eddy is entitled to full credit for the metaphysics of her system (including its inconsistencies), it should be noted here, that, although these mortal minds and mortal bodies of ours are thus, at the outset, peremptorily condemned to the limbo of non-existence, we have by no means heard the last of them. The ostensible mission of Christian Science is mainly the healing of the ills of this non-existent mortal body, and she repeatedly refers to it as an existing fact. And the references to mortal mind are uncomplimentary but frequent. As will be seen hereafter, the fact that it is non-existent does not prevent it from doing an immense amount of mischief. Mrs. Eddy denounces it as "that lazar house, that dismal cell and slaughter house of infamy." It is to be further observed, that, although the "corporeal senses defraud, lie and cheat," and "the heavenly conviction that comes to me [her] is in antagonism with the testimony of

[1] "Mortal body and mind are one, and that one is called man" (p. 146). "Unconscious mortal mind, *alias* matter" (p. 407). In other passages her theory that the mortal mind and body are identical, and therefore both material, is either expressed or implied.

the physical senses," she repeatedly appeals to that same testimony (though usually in vain) in support of her theories. Examples of the sort might be multiplied indefinitely.

Her Idea of a "Self-Evident Proposition."

To return to our subject. Mrs. Eddy repeatedly asserts that her system is scientifically demonstrable. She speaks of it as "this apodictical Principle." Christian Science, she says, "reveals incontrovertibly that Mind[1] is all-in-all, and that the only realities are the divine Mind and idea" (man). Scores of pages are devoted to so-called proof of this proposition; and as a specimen of her metaphysics I will here introduce one of her demonstrations (!) It is like unto the rest, except that it seems to be comprised within a paragraph (which I quote entire) and has the unusual advantage of a beginning and ending which do not run off into the fog. Here it is:

"Divine Science explains the abstract statement that there is one Mind only by the following self-evident proposition. If Good, or God, is real, then evil, the opposite of God, is unreal. Then evil can only seem real by giving reality to the unreal. The children of God have but one Mind. How can God lapse into evil, when God, the Mind of man, never sins. The standard of perfection was originally God and man. Has God taken down his own standard, and has man fallen?"

[1] Although she uses the word "Mind," as well as "Principle," "Substance," etc., in speaking of God, the very fact that she uses these terms indifferently shows that she is bringing down the idea of Person to the lower idea of Principle, which evidences that her real idea of God is Principle, not Person. And her chosen (first) definition of God in the Glossary reveals the same fact.

Sickness and Pain a "Mere Belief."

It having been fully established by "immortal proof" (*sic*) that the divine Principle is the only real substance, and that the so-called material universe, including our mortal bodies and mortal minds, are merely a "false conception" of this non-existent mortal mind, and really possess neither life nor existence, it follows that our bodies, being without sensation, cannot be sick; and as the eternal Principle (of which man is an "idea"—an unseparated part) is, from its very nature, not subject to disease, sickness is simply a "mental state," a "delusion," the "insidious concept of mortal mind." Disease and all its symptoms are mere matters of belief. The pain of the toothache is simply an "erroneous belief in pain"—nothing else. Dyspepsia, for example, is a "random thought." Neuralgia is an "illusion." Bones, ache they ever so badly, are only a "subjective state of mortal mind." Disease is the fear of disease made manifest on the body. "You say a boil is painful," remarks Mrs. Eddy, "but that is impossible, for matter without Mind [or Principle] is not painful. The boil manifests your belief in pain, through inflammation and swelling, and you call this belief a boil!" Poison does not kill; it is the belief that it is a poison which kills. But if a person swallows a deadly potion, unaware of its nature, and believing it to be harmless, what causes the death? Obviously it cannot be his belief. Now it is in emergencies of just this sort that Mrs. Eddy justifies her proud claim that her Science "eschews" all human laws of reason, logic, and common-sense. Observe that, in this last case, she says, it is the "*general*

belief" of mortal minds that it is a poison which causes the death.[1]

Her Method of Dealing with Scripture.

Mrs. Eddy claims that her system is founded upon Biblical authority, or rather upon the scriptures as "illumined" and interpreted by a revelation which came to her "gradually through divine power, during three years of solitary research." Her exegetical method is simplicity itself. Any scripture which she cannot warp and distort to suit the purposes of her argument is rejected as "human error." Take, for illustration, her "Scientific interpretation" of Genesis. She finds that the "spiritual record of creation" closes with chapter ii. 5. The continued account cannot be made to fit the theories of Christian Science; it is "mortal and material," and, therefore, "error." Adam, the scripture record says, was formed of the dust of the ground. "Is it the truth?" she asks, "or is it a lie concerning man and God? It must be the latter, because God presently curses the ground."

The "Original Meaning" of the name Adam.

The above may possibly throw some light on her "Scientific statement" of the original meaning of the word Adam, which I will here introduce in part as a fair example of the sublime absurdity of what she calls her "metaphysical interpretation of Bible terms":

"Adam: error; a falsity; the belief in original sin, sick-

[1] Mrs. Eddy holds to some startling beliefs regarding the diabolical power of "mortal mind." Her fourth husband, Dr. Eddy, died in 1882; the cause was unquestionably heart disease. But Mrs. Eddy is said to have declared that it was arsenical poison mentally administered by antagonistic rivals.

ness and death . . . a curse; a belief in intelligent matter; . . . dust to dust; red sand-stone; nothingness; not God's man who represents the one God; a product of nothing as the opposite of something; the counterfeit of life which ultimates in death; the opposite of love, called hate; the antipodes of spirit's creation, called self-creative matter . . . Divide the name Adam into two syllables, and it reads *a dam*, or obstruction. This suggests the thought of something fluid, of mortal mind in solution,"

and so on *ad nauseam*. Yet this book, which is largely made up of just such stuff as this, has reached a circulation of over 160,000 copies; and an orthodox minister "of twenty years' standing" writes the *Christian Science Sentinel* that he "never understood the metaphysical exegesis of the Bible" until he read it!

Much space is devoted to so-called exposition of passages in the gospels, and it is difficult to understand how her manner of dealing with them can be otherwise than abhorrent to a reverent believer in the scriptures. To such an one her "spiritual version" of the Lord's Prayer must seem a blasphemous travesty.

Her Use of a Spurious Passage.

Before we leave this branch of the subject, one further fact should be noted. Mrs. Eddy assumes to find a warrant for the main assumptions of her system in Mark xvi. 18. This passage stands as the words of Jesus at the head of the chapter on Christian Science Practice, and she repeatedly quotes from, and refers to it. Now, as Prof. G. F. Wright points out (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, April, 1899), and as Mrs. Eddy of course knows, the genuineness of this

passage[1] is discredited by the best textual critics; and she is open to the charge of attempting to bolster up her absurd theories by a spurious scripture, knowing it to be such.

Her System of Healing.

This brings us to the therapeutics of Christian Science, and they are entitled to a measure of respect—not that they are in *theory* less absurd than the other features of her system, but because Mrs. Eddy here discovers, as to certain matters, some glimmerings of common-sense; and further, there is abundant evidence that many patients self-treated, or treated by others, according to her methods, have been benefited, and even cured. But, as I shall presently undertake to show, these results came to pass in spite, as it were, of Mrs. Eddy's therapeutic theories, and the real remedial agent (which is common to all forms of so-called supernatural healing) is one which she holds in special abhorrence.

Mrs. Eddy's Book Indispensable.

Everything but the erroneous belief of mortal mind having been eliminated (as we have seen) from the problem of sickness and pain, how can we rid ourselves

[1] In any event it is wholly inadequate to support the structure she has placed upon it. The passage assumes the existence of evil. It does not deny it, but says that "they" shall be able to cope with it. Professor Wright remarks that "our Lord and his apostles did not fail duly to recognize the limitations of the material world"; that "the miracles which Christ performed were exceptional"; that they were "limited"; and that "only two or three dead persons were raised from the grave; only a small portion of the sick surrounding him were healed; while to the apostles the power to perform miracles was granted in a still more sparing degree."

of this mortal belief, and so achieve perfect health, with the gift of healing others? Right at this important point our author's peculiar talent for vagueness of statement reaches its full fruition. One thing, however, is made perfectly plain, and that is that Mrs. Eddy's works are to be read to the exclusion of all other literature; and that we must, at the outset, procure a copy of her Science and Health[1] (price $3.18 to $6, according to style of binding, etc.[2]); and it should be noted that there are editions extant in which the true Science is more or less adulterated with mere human knowledge, but that there is healing virtue in none other than the genuine copyright edition.

How to rid Ourselves of "Mortal Mind"—And the Result.

It appears that mortal mind (with its beliefs) disappears by a process of evolution in which there are three degrees: Physical (depravity), Moral (evil disappearing), and Spiritual (spiritual salvation). By study and contemplation of the "great truths" of this book (Science and Health) one finally reaches the third degree, when mortal mind disappears, "mental chemicalization" having changed his belief "from a material to a spiritual basis"; and he is now simply an "expression," an "idea" of the divine Principle; is co-existent with this Principle; is denuded of everything mortal or material,

[1] "A Christian Scientist requires my work on Science and Health for his text-book, and so do all his students and patients . . . because it registered this revealed Truth uncontaminated with human hypotheses" (p. 453).

[2] It appears, from an article in the *Arena*, that Mrs. Eddy's souvenir spoons (price $3 to $5) and her photographs ($1 and $2) are also urged on the faithful as a means of grace and healing.

and as "pain cannot exist where there is no mortal mind to feel it," he is no longer subject to the ills and infirmities of the flesh.[1] If he break his non-existent arm, or crush his non-existent foot, he will feel no pain, and can, by the power of his divine Science, cause them to heal instantly. He may with impunity expose himself to diphtheria, fever, and smallpox. "The journals of Christian Science," remarks Professor Wright, in the article I have referred to, "boast of the triumph of their faith over the effects of deadly poison."[2] The so-called laws of health may be safely disregarded. "Jesus," asserts Mrs. Eddy, "never recommended or employed them; . . . . he urged no obedience to material laws, but acted in direct disobedience thereto." "Faith in the rules of health begets and fosters disease," she continues; "ignorance re-

[1] The statement has been made repeatedly in the public press that Mrs. Eddy has not been strong or well for years; and that she is now in a semi-invalid condition. That this should be true (if it is true) of the "discoverer and founder" of Christian Science is a significant comment on the fundamental dogma of that system.

[2] The Professor is undoubtedly warranted in presuming that that "error of mortal mind," common-sense, will prevent the mass of Mrs. Eddy's followers from carrying out the principles of her system to their logical effect. "They will not," he says, "put poison into food or adulterate it with any injurious elements on the plea that as a man thinketh so he is, and that if he is ignorant of the poison in his system he will not be injured by it. [But according to Mrs. Eddy, the "majority opinion" that it is a poison may kill him. See p. 10. L. D. H.] They will not disregard the sanitary precautions necessary to check the spread of diphtheria, smallpox, typhoid fever and other contagious diseases. They will not neglect to properly ventilate their houses, to wear rubbers in wet weather, and warm clothing in winter. But if they do not neglect these things it will be because they disregard the fundamental principles of their so-called science."

garding them is the best condition for the reception of Truth." Even the apparently innocent act of bathing is regarded with stern disfavor. "Bathing or rubbing to alter secretions, or remove unhealthy exhalations from the cuticle receives a useful rebuke from Christian healing." "Is civilization only a higher form of idolatry," asks Mrs Eddy indignantly, "that man should bow down to a flesh brush, to flannels, to baths, diet, exercise and air?"

The One Sensible Idea in the System.

Mrs. Eddy's theory as to the prophylactic and therapeutic effects of ignoring disease is, of course, pushed far beyond the bounds of reason, yet it has in it the one grain of sense in this bushel of nonsense. Many of us give over-much attention to our aches and pains, imaginary or otherwise. We brood over them.[1] Our tendency to talk about them is not only harmful to ourselves, but often a weariness and a trial to our friends. Undoubtedly ailments which would otherwise pass off are kept alive by giving them air in this way. The tendency of the teachings of Christian Science in this regard, is to discourage the practice of discussing "miseries" and symptoms (how many of us take a sad pleasure therein!); the habit of over-drugging, so much fostered by patent medicine ad-

[1] "The mind has a remarkable power of exciting and exalting painful sensations in various parts of the body. . . . Pain excited by a physical cause may be continued long after the cessation of the exciting cause by keeping the attention directed to it. . . . The remedy is to engage the thoughts as much as possible on some other subject."—*Robert Bentley Todd, M.D., F.R.S.* I am much indebted to Dr. Todd's account of his investigation of the phenomena of the effect of the mind's action on the body. It is one of the most valuable and instructive contributions to the literature of the subject.

vertisements (and by some alleged physicians, as well); and also to brace up the will, and discourage morbid introspection; and to this extent the system does good, and not evil as is its nature.

"No Intellectual Proficiency Requisite."

Just what special preparation is needed to qualify a Christian Scientist to practice metaphysical healing does not plainly appear. It is stated, however, that "no intellectual proficiency is requisite to the learner," which is just as well, as he has no apparent use for anything of the sort. It is indispensable that the healer should absolutely disbelieve in the existence of the disease he treats. He must not see it. He must not know whether it is, for example, smallpox or bad-husband headache. In short, the ideal qualification for a healer is a state of mental vacuity, with a mind closed against the evidence of his senses.

How the Remedy is Administered.

The remedy is always the same. "Christian Science employs Mind alone as the curative Principle, acknowledging that the divine Mind has all power"; "any material remedy is simply pernicious,"[1] and the manner of the treatment is in this wise: "Argue with the patient (mentally not audibly) that he has no disease; . . . mentally insist that health is the everlasting fact, and sickness

[1] An ex-judge who furnishes learned opinions on divers subjects to the *Christian Science Sentinel*, is especially strong along the lines of Bible exegesis. He says: "It is true that in one case Jesus anointed the eye of a blind man with clay, but it is also true that he sent him to the nearest pool to wash it off, *thus showing his contempt for all material remedy.*" The italics are mine.

the temporary falsity." The exigencies of the case may be such that it becomes necessary to "startle mortal mind in order to break the dream of suffering." Then you shock the patient by vehemently telling him, for example, that "he suffers only as the insane suffer, from a mere belief."

A Drastic Remedy.

And "the perusal of the author's publications heals sickness constantly." A Healer states in the *Sentinel* that ten pages of Science and Health read to a grip patient cured the attack. Sometimes, however, as a result of using this literature for reading treatment, "certain moral and physical symptoms seem aggravated" (one can easily believe it); but it is only "mental and moral fermentation" (that seems probable also), and is, in fact, "a favorable symptom." Quite possibly; but, having read the book, I think, on the whole, I should prefer to take my chances on the "silent" treatment.

A Precocious Child.

As an example of the "mental heights" to which even a little child may attain from only a casual hearing of "inspired truth" from her lips, Mrs. Eddy relates the following incident:

"A little girl, who had occasionally listened to my explanations, wounded her finger badly. She seemed not to notice it. On being questioned she answered ingenuously: 'There is no sensation in matter.' Bounding off with laughing eyes, she presently added—'Mamma, my finger is not a bit sore.' "

To an unprejudiced person this would seem to be a

case of an abnormally precocious child, with a disagreeable habit of aping her elders, who ought to be corrected with a slipper, and stood up in a corner or sent to bed.

Mrs. Eddy sets forth her Record as a Healer.

Mrs. Eddy asserts that as a result of her treatment "shortened limbs have been elongated, cicatrized joints made supple, carious bones restored to healthy condition, and the lost substance of lungs restored"; that she has herself "healed hopeless disease and raised[1] the dying"; has cured, by "mental surgery alone," dislocated joints and spinal vertebrae; that the treatment can be used with perfect success in cases of *congenital* deformity; that, in short, "the worth of my [her] teachings has been proved by thousands of well authenticated cases of healing;" and that, "for the most part these have been cases abandoned by regular medical attendants as hopeless."

She "does not believe in Testimonials."

The familiar testimonials from grateful patients are not lacking. "I do not believe in them," declares Mrs. Eddy; "usually, when healing, I have said to the individual, Go and tell no man." But her inclination to conceal her good works is sacrificed to the extent of favoring us with quite a number of these interesting certificates. I make some selections at random in which the statements are, in brief, as follows, the first being a case of absent healing:

[1] Mrs. Eddy claimed that by omnipresent mental treatment she healed the Prince of Wales of his fever in 1892; and that she would have healed President Garfield but for the baleful influence of certain recreant Christian Scientists.

But she favors us with a few.

Mr. B.—Bone of foot crushed by a falling timber. He wrote to Mrs. Eddy, and, he says, "my painful and swollen foot was restored at once on your [her] receipt of my letter, and that very day I put on my boot and walked several miles."

Baby E.—Case of ulceration of bowels. "Reduced almost to a skeleton, and growing worse; doctor said case was hopeless." Mrs. Eddy held the child in her arms a few moments, and "in ten minutes thereafter he was well. Ate a quantity of cabbage the next day."

Mr. C.—Long-standing case of hip disease, caused by fall on spike; "bone carious for several inches." When Mrs. Eddy reached his bedside "the dew of death was on his brow." In ten minutes pain ceased; in two weeks went to work, hip being healed.[1]

Some Kindred Delusions.

Now although Mrs. Eddy strenuously and repeatedly insists that Christian Science has no affinity whatever with any other system of healing, it nevertheless falls into the same category with "faith," "miraculous," and all other forms of so-called supernatural healing; and a brief reference to what may perhaps be called the testimonial literature of these systems may not be uninstructive. It is undoubtedly true that many sick people (mainly nervous and hysterical cases) who have taken these various treatments have been greatly helped and even perma-

[1] With the wonderful record as a Healer evidenced (!) by her own statements, and by these testimonials, it is not strange that Mrs. Eddy should rest content on her laurels, and not subject her healing powers to further tests. For several years all the editions of Science and Health have stated that "the author takes no patients, and declines medical consultation."

nently cured; but it is to be noted that, in common with Mrs. Eddy, these other apostles and historians scarcely allude to this class of cures, but, as a rule, put forward, instead, accounts of healing which are simply incredible, and must put a severe strain upon the faith and credulity of even their most devoted adherents. These accounts are especially instructive as exhibitions of the fallibility of human evidence, and the uncertainty of asserted facts in medical experience.

The Convulsionist Miracles.

During the convulsionist madness in France (1727–35) a large number of marvelous cures were, it was claimed, wrought in connection with the self-martyrdom of the Jansenist monk, Francis of Paris. The record of these miracles, made by a respectable Jansenist priest, fills three bulky volumes.[1] All manner of deadly diseases were instantly cured, so runs the record, by touching one of Francis' garments, or even his tombstone in St. Medardus Church. A Spanish nobleman, one of whose eyes had oozed out as the result of an accident, placed over the empty socket a piece of the martyr's shirt. In a few hours the eye was "perfectly restored." This account was supported by the sworn testimony of "many honest reputable persons," and the celebrated French historian, Rollin, stated in a letter still extant, that he knew the circumstances; and he expressed his entire belief in the miracle. Judges, advocates, and physicians certified to these cures.

[1] *Histoire des Miraculés et des Convulsionaires de St. Médard, par P. F. Mathieu.* Extracts tr. by James Parton.

The Miracle of Lourdes.

To come down to our own day. That monstrous fraud of the century, the "wonder-working shrine" of Our Lady of Lourdes, in the French Pyrenees, is carried on by or with the connivance of those high in authority in the Roman Catholic Church. The order of the Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, who have it in charge, have established a "miracle verification office," which assumes to scrutinize, and weigh judicially, the evidence of cures alleged to have been wrought by the miraculous waters, in conjunction with the exercise of faith and prayer to the Virgin. They have accumulated documentary evidence showing conclusively, *on its face*, that thousands of cases of grave organic disease have been so cured. And that many *have* been cured there, is evidenced by the great numbers of discarded canes, crutches, and surgical appliances hung in front of the sacred grotto.

Marvelous Happenings right here at Home.

To come still nearer home. In an address before a meeting of the National Christian Alliance in Beulah Park, Cleveland, in 1898, [1] Rev. A. B. Simpson, president of the alliance, cited the following incident in his own experience as an exemplification of the "healing power of faith in God":

"While walking along a country road a few weeks ago," he said, "I tripped over a stake, dislocating my knee cap in falling. I was in great pain, but managed to ask God to remove it. As I prayed, I could feel two forces struggling in my leg, but at last I felt my knee cap

[1] *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, August 5, 1898.

sliding slowly back into place, and shortly my pain left me, and I was recovered."

In an address made the following day, Rev. G. N. Eldridge, superintendent of the work of the alliance in Michigan and Indiana, said:

"A few years ago I had an accident, and cut my first finger badly, and raised a blood blister on my thumb. I asked God to heal my finger, and he did so. But when I rose the next morning my thumb was very painful. I had not asked God to heal my thumb, and he had simply accomplished what I asked him to do. I then asked him to heal my thumb, and he did so."[1]

And these things were heard without audible protest by great audiences, made up in large part, at least, of presumably sane and intelligent people!

Dowieism.

The notorious John Alexander Dowie, founder and head of the Christian Catholic Church, has flooded the country with millions of testimonials of cures accomplished in his "divine healing homes"; and the methods of his system as well as those of the Christian Scientists have been somewhat extensively advertised in the verdicts of coroner's juries. But I need not particularize further.

The Evidence Defective and Misleading.

A large mass of the fiction contained in these statements may be accounted for, and the tale of actual cures must be greatly reduced, by cases of (1) faulty diagnosis; (2) hallucination, to which the senses are so very subject; (3) malingering; (4) intentional misstatements on the

[1] *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, August 6, 1898.

part of patients or witnesses; (5) spontaneous healing; (6) what are known as "self-limited" diseases; and (7) last, but not least, ailments that are purely imaginary.

What is the Actual Curative Agent?

Admitting, as I think we may, the general good faith of these witnesses and patients, the question remains, Were the cures that *did* take place supernatural? Was the remedial agent the "divine Principle of Truth" as mentally or audibly administered by Mrs. Eddy? Was it the fragment of the Jansenist martyr's raiment? the miraculous waters of Lourdes? or were nature's established laws set aside in direct response to the prayer of the Faith Healer? The answer must unquestionably be in the negative. All testimony purporting to support such a theory breaks down under the analysis of strictly scientific examination. And, moreover, science has abundantly established the fact that *the* curative agent in the cases we are considering is none other than that "mortal mind" to whose discredit we hear so much in the pages of Science and Health.

Is Mrs. Eddy a Dupe of her own Vagaries?

If I am right in presuming, as I do, that Mrs. Eddy cannot avoid accepting personally this scientific explanation of the phenomena of metaphysical healing, that fact fully explains her vituperative abuse of the real remedial agent. The evidence is such, it seems to me, as to constrain an unprejudiced person to the belief that she is not in the least the dupe of her own vagaries; and there are grounds for a suspicion, at least, that she is a Christian Scientist "for revenue only." At any rate, as

the drawing feature of her system is its supernaturalism (with its alleged healing power), she is bound, for business reasons, not only to defend it, but to discredit all theories that contravene it.

The Mind's Influence on the Body.

The influence of the mind on the body has, in recent years, been the subject of scientific study and investigation by a large number of trained specialists, whose only object has been the truly scientific one, i.e., to arrive at the exact truth. Much testimony has been adduced which, as I conceive, bears directly upon the subject of so-called supernatural healing in all its forms. It would be obviously impossible, even were the writer competent (which he is not), to enter here into an adequate analysis of this testimony. It will be sufficient to remark that I shall mention no fact or incident except upon reliable authority; but I hold no one else responsible for some of the conclusions drawn as to the bearing of these facts and incidents upon the subject in hand.

What the Scientists Say.

It is a well-settled fact that ideas conceived in the mind—that is, the results of processes taking place in the gray matter of the brain—affect the bodily secretions; that the mind thus "constantly plays upon the body for good or evil, . . . causing disease, coöperating with it, or causing its departure"; and that this action of the mind upon the body is by means of the nerves *only*. The mind constantly influences the involuntary as well as the voluntary bodily processes, and by being specially directed to some part of the body may, and often does, cause

functional disturbance; or, on the contrary, may, and often does, relieve an existing disturbance. But such mental action is initiated *only* in the brain of the subject. The supposed influence exerted on the body of the subject by the mind of the "healer" (by whatsoever name his particular delusion may be called) has no real existence, neither can his mind influence the action of the mind of the subject except in the way of suggestion.

Does Christian Science Education add to One's "Healing Power"?

It follows, therefore, that when the Christian Scientist has passed his novitiate—has procured and studied Science and Health, passed the "third degree," has, perhaps, paid Mrs. Eddy $200 to $300 for a course of lectures, and has thus become a duly qualified Healer, his *actual* qualifications as a mental healer are just what they were at the outset—they are certainly not increased; I should suppose they would be diminished.[1] That is, he may by words, gestures, by the influence of his personality, if you will, reach the brain of the patient by way of his eyes, ears, or sense of feeling, and may thus excite there mental action which may pass on by way of the nerves to the seat of the bodily disturbance, and may, or may not, relieve it.

[1] It may be said that perfect faith in the means used in healing will result from his studies; and that such faith will increase the effectiveness of the means. This is true within limits. But, presumably, he had the faith at the outset, and any increase therein would, in my judgment, be more than counterbalanced by the mental deterioration—the falling off in judgment and common-sense, so needful in dealing with the sick—which would result from a "full course" of Christian Science study.

The "Sum Total" of Christian Science and Kindred Healing Delusions.

When the further fact is added that such mental action may be initiated in the mind by various causes, without the intervention of a second person, we have the sum total of Christian Science, and all other forms of so-called supernatural healing.

The Availing Prayer of the Sick—How is it Answered?

Professor H. C. King used often to quote to his students William James' remark: "It is useless to discuss whether man will pray; constituted as he is, he *must* pray." God, having implanted in us this will to pray, we must believe he answers, according to his wisdom, the prayer of the sick. And it is not for us to say that any reverent prayer is unavailing, though it be addressed to the Virgin at the grotto of Lourdes, or at the tomb of St. Francis of Paris, or even if it be the voiceless petition addressed to "Principle" by the Christian Scientist. But if haply the healing answer comes, it comes by nature's means; and that means may be, and unquestionably often is, the mental action we are discussing. It is true that while the *fact* of the mind's prophylactic and therapeutic action is scientifically established, the *manner* of such action is an unsolved mystery. But it is not supernatural, and, in the last analysis, is no more mysterious than the action of some of the remedies in the Materia Medica.

Mental Action often a Preserver of Health, and a Healer of Disease.

It appears, then, that this agency is not only a conservator of health, but also a potent remedial force. It has often ministered to a diseased body

when physic has altogether failed; and in well-authenticated cases it has arrested the progress of internal organic disease. Every cure brought about by modern miracles, Faith Curers, and by pseudo-scientists, from good Bishop Berkeley with his Tar Water, and Perkins with his Metallic Tractors, down to our own Mrs. Eddy with her healing Principle, has been paralleled by mental means alone.

This Action often Unwittingly invoked by Alleged "Healers."

And a further fact should be again emphasized, and that is, that as a result of a long series of scientific experiments it has been shown conclusively that while the practices of these systems often unwittingly invoke the real remedial agent, the alleged curative agent on which the systems or beliefs are based, does not figure in the least in the prevention, alleviation, or cure of disease. And this conclusion is founded on the sound logical principle that the supernatural cannot be imputed to any phenomena which admit of a natural explanation.

The Remarkable Cases of Rev. Edward Irving and Immanuel Kant.

The case of Rev. Edward Irving, the great Scottish preacher, may be cited as illustrative of what may sometimes be accomplished in the way of checking the progress of disease by resolute mental effort backed by a strong will. In 1832, shortly after he had taken up with Faith Healing and other vagaries, he was attacked in London with cholera. The disease was epidemic in the city at the time, and the case was unmistakable. It was Sunday morning, and although he was in great agony, and, according to a competent medical man, at times "in a dangerous state of collapse," he

determined to preach. In his eyes, disease was a sin; an evidence of a lack of faith; and contending resolutely, as he imagined, against the "evil spirit," he painfully made his way to his church, a quarter of a mile away. "As I feebly ascended the pulpit," said the good man, "the pains seemed to leave me." He soon gathered strength, and preached for an hour with a fervor unknown to him. The next morning he was strong and hearty as before the attack.

Not the least among the valuable legacies left to the world by Kant was his example of what a person may accomplish by his own unaided mental strength in the face of the gravest physical disability. And his case, taken in connection with that of Irving, illustrates more than one phase of the question under consideration. In person small and spare, weak of muscle, of sensitive health and defective vision, Kant was continually beset with physical infirmities; but he early learned to combat them by mental effort. He frequently checked incipient illness by the exercise of his will power, and by the persistent use of this agency he succeeded in warding off prostrating disease, and was thus enabled to perform those great intellectual tasks which won him a place in the first rank of the world's philosophical thinkers. His feeble body fairly wasted away at last, but to the very end—and he lived eighty years—he preserved his rigid self-control.

The Philosopher Understood, but the Mystic did not.

But Kant thoroughly understood the nature of the remedy he was using, and therein the philosopher differed from the mystic. Irving supposed

he was engaged in a moral struggle with cholera, and not (as was in fact the case), in a *mental* contest against it.

A Miraculous Cure by Our Lady of Lourdes.

I cannot forbear referring in this connection to one more suggestive circumstance. There is a quaint book, strongly tinctured with a flavor of medieval superstition and fanaticism, entitled Our Lady of Lourdes, which was honored with a special brief by Pope Pius IX. The author, Henri Lasserre, evidently an honest, stupid sort of a person, is "of a piety most devoted," and regards philosophers and *savants* with pious horror as children of the Evil One. In his preface, M. Lasserre says that the book was undertaken as an act of gratitude to the Virgin of the Spring for her miraculous restoration of his sight. The history of his case is told in minute detail. He was almost totally blind. Eye specialists could not help him, but on bathing his eyes from a bottle of the Lourdes waters sent to him at Paris, his eyesight was instantly, completely, and permanently restored.

The "Miracle" paralleled by Mental Means alone.

Now I chanced upon a case of ophthalmia which was cured "through the use of hypnotism" (it *was* cured at any rate) by the inventor of the term, Dr. James Braid, of Manchester, England; and it happens curiously enough that the antecedent history of the case was, so far as a layman may judge from the details given, practically identical with that of M. Lasserre's. Dr. Braid was himself a man of scientific attainments, and the facts in the case were authenticated by competent medical men, though they did not concur in the Doctor's inferences. When he

took the case the patient was almost sightless. Having placed her in a "hypnotic" state, he called her attention to her eyes and kept it there by gently touching them occasionally. Dr. Braid *says* he "directed the nervous force to the eyes," which involves an assumption. *Her* brain did the directing. She remained in this state ten minutes. As a result of the first treatment there was marked improvement, and six like treatments resulted in a perfect and permanent cure.

A number of other cases might be cited showing that all these cures imputed to supernatural agencies might have been, and the evidence is conclusive that, in fact, they were, brought about by natural means alone; and I think it is abundantly shown that this means was mental action.

The Christian Science Millennium.

Mrs. Eddy's description of the ideal world[1] of Christian Science is glowing, but, after her usual manner, exceedingly vague. However, every form of Evil will, of course, have been expelled by the "power of Truth." There will be no opportunity for the exercise of those qualities of patient love, kindness, and practical, helpful generosity which now characterize many of the adherents

[1] Heaven and Earth, in the "mortal" sense of the terms, are unknown to Christian Science. The "Scientific meaning" of the former is, for example, "government by Principle"; of the latter, "a compound idea." But, speaking in terms of "mortal mind," it should be clearly understood, that Mrs. Eddy is not here referring to a future world—to what we regard as a future state, but to conditions that will obtain in *this* world, in this mortal state, when all shall have been gathered into the Christian Science fold, and to a condition that is supposed to really prevail here now within the fold.

of the system, for there will be no sickness or suffering, or poor or wayward to be ministered to, consoled, succored, or uplifted. There will be no choice between the good and evil thing, for there will be no evil; no chance for the exercise of courage and patience and hope, for there will be no foes to meet, no suffering to bear, and no better or happier future to look forward to. This is a state of things that will make of men and women mental and moral jelly fish. How can anything worthy the name of character be built up under such conditions?

Meanwhile, the System is doing Grave Mischief.

But in the meantime, and pending the coming of the Christian Science millennium, the system is doing an incalculable amount of mischief. The whole *tendency* of its so-called metaphysical teaching is to degrade the intellect; and its adherents escape mental deterioration only in so far as they ignore its sophistries, and take counsel of their own reason and common-sense. And it is by the exercise of these same faculties of "mortal mind" that many of Mrs. Eddy's followers escape the perils of her system of healing; for in case of serious illness they avail themselves of competent medical advice and treatment. But, unfortunately, there are some of her devotees who will suffer and die, or (as is more frequently the case) will peril or sacrifice the lives of the helpless sick under their care, rather than call in proper professional help or permit the use of any "material" remedies.

The Case of Harold Frederic.

Harold Frederic died a victim of Christian Science. His prominence in the world of letters, the tragedy

of his untimely end, and the subsequent legal inquiry, attracted world-wide attention to the methods of these ignorant charlatans who masquerade as Christian healers. Just how it came to pass that this scholarly, clear-headed man of the world fell into the hands of these people, is not generally known; but they did get hold of him, and the medical evidence shows that, instead of following the negative treatment prescribed by the system (which might have given Frederic a fighting chance for his life), they did and permitted just those things which, as the veriest novice of a sick nurse or a doctor's apprentice would have known, must, in a case of the kind, be attended with fatal results.

One Class of Christian Science Recruits.

How can we account for the phenomenal success of this particular delusion? Some of the reasons are, it seems to me, not far to seek. The ranks of its devotees are largely recruited from that numerous class of people (corresponding to the "floaters" among the evangelical churches) who go about all their lives in a feverish search for some new mystery. They are the victims of every epidemic of superstition that sweeps over the land. The plain gospel of Jesus Christ does not appeal to them. Their faith must find its temporary resting place on some vague, shadowy creed which hides itself in mystery. For preference, they will languish in sickness under the care of a pretentious empiric rather than be cured with a dose of orthodox medicine at the hands of a regular practitioner.

The Therapeutic Value of the Chestnut.

And superstition, medical and otherwise, is by no means confined to people of low mental attainments. Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes used to show the widespread belief in mystery cures by an experiment in which the genial humorist took much delight. In his lecture-room at the Harvard Medical School, or in a company of those brainy men and women with whom it was his wont to associate, he would, on occasion, challenge all present to empty their pockets, and if the challenge was accepted, there would often roll out from them several worn horse chestnuts carried about as a sovereign remedy for rheumatism. It may be remarked in passing, that those who carry about either these material chestnuts or those of the Christian Science or Faith Healing variety (if the figure is permissible) always fail lamentably when they undertake to make up a satisfactory case of cause and effect between their particular "chestnut" and the cure of their rheumatism or what not.

As to religious superstition, it scarcely needs be added that among the victims of some of its most absurd forms are people of great intellectual acquirements.

Making Merchandise of Sickness and Suffering.

But the system of Christian Science healing, and Lourdes miracle healing, and like delusions, would languish and die were it not for their marvelous success in deluding the sick and suffering. And herein is their crowning infamy. In common with the most conscienceless quack who sells his worthless nostrums on the street corner, Mrs. Eddy and Company and the Fathers of the Im-

maculate Conception make merchandise of the wounds and sorrows of poor humanity. A poor devotee of Christian Science stricken, perhaps, with an illness past all help, seeks healing virtue in Science and Health, one of Mrs. Eddy's photographs, or souvenir spoons, for which he pays, with hard-earned money, a trebly exorbitant price. Or a poverty-stricken Paris seamstress expends her last centime on a bottle of the waters of Lourdes for her sister dying of consumption in a garret; or devotes a five-sou candle to the Virgin of the Grotto, which the thrifty Fathers afterwards sell.[1]

The "Illusive Bread of Hope."

These people succeed and wax rich because they offer to their deluded victims, for a price, the bread of hope, for which those who suffer, hunger always. Weary, perhaps, of days, months, or years of pain, worn by the torturing effects of remedies that do not avail, hopeless of any earthly help, can we wonder that they eagerly give themselves over to the illusive dream that by virtue of these mysterious agencies the established order of nature will, perchance, in their behalf be set aside? But they find at last, as we all find, that nature's law is inexorable, and that there is no escape from its operations.

Possibly Christian Science is just what they need.

If those chronic seekers after some new thing to which they may, for a day, pin their faith; those religious enthusiasts who have Promptings and Revealings, or new

[1] It is stated that the profits arising from the sale of tapers devoted to the Virgin of Lourdes, and not used, defray the entire expenses of the bureau of management.

interpretations of the Seven Seals, which they are ever ready to declare, in season and out of season,—all those people who are the bane of church prayer meetings, and a thorn in the side of long-suffering pastors,—could be gathered into the Christian Science fold and *kept* there, it would, I think, be a cause for rejoicing. But, numerous as this class of people are among the adherents of that system, they do not make up the bulk of its followers.

It is recruited largely from the Sick and Suffering.

As has been said, *the* drawing power of the system is Mrs. Eddy's vigorously asserted claim that by means of knowledge received in a supernatural manner, she has solved the problem of pain and disease; and a great proportion of her devotees are those upon whom fate has laid the burden of sickness and suffering. And great numbers of them have fallen away from Christian churches as well as from rational methods of treating their bodily ailments. And this is the pity of it! Priests and physicians, whose exalted office it is to go hand in hand ministering to the souls and bodies of suffering and sorrowing humanity, may, in view of this falling away, well ask themselves whether they have in any wise fallen short of their duties and opportunities.

Is the Physician without Fault?

The influence of mental action in causing and curing disease has long been recognized by physicians and students of mental physiology. But does the general practitioner—the doctor of the people—make practical use of this knowledge in the diagnosis and treatment of disease? That this influence is *not* an element of causa-

tion can seldom be assumed as to any ailment. Pathologists tell us that, for example, a typhoid germ which has entered the system, but would otherwise pass away, may find mischievous lodgement and cause fever as the unquestionable (though indirect) result of mental disturbance. And the continuance of such disturbance may retard or prevent recovery. Does the doctor always look carefully into this question and use his discovery, if any, to the profit of his patients? A patient with a strong will instinctively fights a disease mentally from the outset. Does the doctor frankly recognize and show his appreciation of this coöperation; and does he tactfully but persistently use such means as he can to secure like aid from the less strong-minded patient, thus showing the former what he *does*, and the latter what he *may* do independently of medicinal aid? Does the doctor always stay his hand from the prescription until he is very sure the *Vis Medicatrix Naturæ* needs the aid of pill or potion? Does he accept and act upon Dr. Holmes' aphorism that medicine proper "is always *directly* harmful; it may sometimes be indirectly beneficial"? When he finds that a patient really needs no medicine does he always tell him so? (Of course I do not here allude to those numerous cases[1] of disease of the imagination which indicate bread pills—a most excellent remedy, by the way, whose merits

[1] Physicians often find themselves embarrassed by the imperative demand of such patients for a medicinal remedy, and the demand is met, and the *imagination* satisfied, by the exhibition of these apparently, potent pills. And there are well-authenticated instances of the successful treatment of actual disease by means of these counterfeit pills, and other mock remedies, the patient being

are not, I think, properly recognized by the medical profession.) Does he resolutely set his face against that curse of this generation,—over-dosing and over-drugging? Is he diligent in making known the truth that a sunny disposition, a good courage, honest work, and plenty of it, and a clean, temperate life,—all conserve health and well-being? And, finally, does he use the influence which his profession has earned, and so well deserves, to spread abroad and enforce the truth that they who break the laws of nature, or suffer innocently from its operations, must pay to the utmost the penalty which nature exacts alike from the guilty and innocent, and that any attempt to escape through Christian Science or similar vagaries can end only in disappointment? I am constrained to the belief that the conscientious physician does all these things, and therefore if illness overtakes me I shall, with

led to believe that he is taking a powerful medicament. During the siege of Breda in 1625, a large number of the soldiers of the Prince of Orange's army were attacked with scurvy. Many patients altogether lost heart, and the mortality was serious. Finally the Prince sent word to the sufferers that they should at once be provided with a wonderfully efficacious remedy; and he himself prepared the balsam (four drops of perfectly innocuous colored liquid to a gallon of water) which was given out in bottles of orthodox shape. The effect of the delusion was astonishing. The "gracious prince's cure" checked the epidemic at once, and soon stopped it entirely. These cases show that actual organic disease will sometimes yield to the action of the imagination alone.

A story, for which the writer cannot vouch, was told of a man who kept a case of specifics (extensively advertised some years since), the various remedies being designated by numbers. He was attacked with an illness which indicated No. 5. But as the bottle was empty, he made up some No. 5 by mixing together some No. 2 and No. 3, and he took it with perfectly satisfactory results.

the utmost confidence, go to him for counsel and help, and not to Mrs. Eddy or any of her kind.

May the Church Pastor do More?

And the Preacher. One of the old school, whom I knew many years ago, used often to offer up a petition for "this sick and dying congregation." Perhaps he asked better than he knew. And again, perhaps he knew; for all his life he was himself much acquainted with pain and sorrow; and it is only through such an experience that the pastor comes into a true and intimate knowledge of the pathetic life tragedies going on all about him. Does he ever close his ears to the cry of the "pain of the world"? As he stands before his waiting congregation does he always remember that to many who are there pain is the great, overshadowing fact of life? They are there, perhaps, in weariness and discouragement, looking to him for an answer to the unspoken question, "How shall I bear it?" Do they ever look to him in vain? Does he ever let them go without some word of consolation and hope? Pain is not always pathetic or interesting. It is sometimes over-obtrusive, disagreeable, and difficult to deal with. But to those who know it by personal experience, it is always pitiful. And I humbly conceive it to be one of the most sacred and important duties of a pastor to search it out among his people, and do all that in him lies to relieve it. And in just so far as he is able, by appeals to reason and common-sense, to put the suffering ones in a right mental attitude and tranquilize their minds; in just so far as he can arouse in them courage and hope, and also, and above all, an abiding faith in the good pur-